

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Claims 1-22 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 23-42 are added. The following is the status of the above-captioned application, as amended.

Claims 1-22 (Cancelled).

Claim 23 (New). A *Bacillus licheniformis* mutant host cell derived from a parent *B. licheniformis* host cell, which mutant host cell is mutated in one or more gene(s) encoding one or more secreted polypeptide(s) which is at least 80% identical to one or more of the polypeptides shown in SEQ ID NOs: 2 to 248, wherein the mutant host cell secretes at least 5% less of the one or more secreted polypeptide(s) than the parent host cell, when they are cultivated under comparable conditions.

Claim 24 (New). The host cell of claim 23 which is mutated by a partial or complete deletion of the one or more gene(s) encoding the one or more secreted polypeptide(s).

Claim 25 (New). The host cell of claim 23, in which a gene encoding a secreted polypeptide which is at least 80% identical to the polypeptide shown in SEQ ID NO: 134 is mutated.

Claim 26 (New). The host cell of claim 23, which is mutated in two or more genes encoding two or more secreted polypeptides.

Claim 27 (New). The host cell of claim 23, which comprises one or more heterologous gene(s) encoding one or more heterologous polypeptide(s).

Claim 28 (New). The host cell of claim 27, wherein the heterologous gene(s) are present in at least two copies.

Claim 29 (New). The host cell of claim 27, wherein the heterologous gene(s) are stably integrated into the genome of the cell.

Claim 30 (New). The host cell of claim 27, wherein the heterologous gene(s) are integrated into the genome of the cell without leaving any antibiotic resistance marker genes at the site of integration.

Claim 31 (New). The host cell of claim 27, wherein the heterologous gene(s) are transcribed from a heterologous promoter or from an artificial promoter.

Claim 32 (New). The host cell of claim 27, wherein the heterologous gene(s) are comprised in an operon.

Claim 33 (New). The host cell of claim 27, wherein the heterologous polypeptide(s) are antimicrobial peptides and/or fusion peptides comprising a peptide which in its native form has antimicrobial activity.

Claim 34 (New). The host cell of claim 27, wherein the heterologous polypeptide(s) have biosynthetic activity and produce a compound or an intermediate of interest.

Claim 35 (New). The host cell of claim 34, wherein the compound or intermediate of interest comprises vitamins, amino acids, antibiotics, carbohydrates, or surfactants.

Claim 36 (New). The host cell of claim 35, wherein the carbohydrates comprise hyaluronic acid.

Claim 37 (New). The host cell of claim 27, wherein the heterologous polypeptide(s) are enzymes.

Claim 38 (New). The host cell of claim 37, wherein the enzyme is an enzyme of a class selected from the group of enzyme classes consisting of oxidoreductases (EC 1), transferases (EC 2), hydrolases (EC 3), lyases (EC 4), isomerases (EC 5), and ligases (EC 6).

Claim 39 (New). The host cell of claim 38, wherein the enzyme is an enzyme with an activity selected from the group of enzyme activities consisting of aminopeptidase, amylase, amyloglucosidase, carbohydrase, carboxypeptidase, catalase, cellulase, chitinase, cutinase, cyclodextrin glycosyltransferase, deoxyribonuclease, esterase, galactosidase, beta-

galactosidase, glucoamylase, glucose oxidase, glucosidase, haloperoxidase, hemicellulase, invertase, isomerase, laccase, ligase, lipase, lyase, mannanase, mannosidase, oxidase, pectinase, peroxidase, phenoloxidase, phytase, polyphenoloxidase, protease, ribonuclease, transferase, transglutaminase, and xylanase.

Claim 40 (New). The host cell of claim 39, wherein the enzyme is an amylase or a mannanase.

Claim 41 (New). A process for producing at least one product of interest, comprising cultivating the *B. licheniformis* mutant host cell of claim 23 in a suitable medium for production of the at least one product.

Claim 42 (New). The process of claim 41, further comprising isolating or purifying the at least one product of interest.